Mr. *FLEETWOOD's*

SERMON

Preach'd *August* the 4*th.* 1700.

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A SERMON

Preach'd *August* the 4th 1700.

BY

W. FLEETWOOD,

CHAPLAIN in Ordinary to His

MAJESTY.

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PREFACE.

I *GIVE this Sermon up to the Deſires of a great many good People of the Pariſhes of* St. Auſtin, *and* St. Dunſtan *in the* Weſt, *to whom I can deny nothing of this Nature, which they ſhall find reaſonable to ask of me: But not to their Deſires only, but alſo to the Hopes I have, that, from ſomething or other hinted at in it, other Wiſe and Virtuous People may be put upon conſidering, whereabouts we are; and on contributing all that lies in them to the preventing whatever Evils we may apprehend from the great Loſs we have ſuſtained in the Death of the moſt noble and moſt hopeful* Prince, *the* Duke *of* GLOUCESTER. *I know, I have no other Aims than theſe, in making this Sermon publick, and they who know me well, will, I believe, think ſo too: I undertake not therefore to defend the Irregularity of ſome of my thoughts, nor the Order in which they are ranged. They were produc'd in Grief and deep Concern, and that, I think, may in ſome ſort, excuſe them with tender and good-natur'd People. I am only careful of guarding againſt*

two ſorts of Men, 1ſt. *Such as will needs* call *this great Misfortune, a* Judgment of God, *for what hath paſſed amongſt us.* 2d. *Such as will certainly try* to make it *one, as ſoon as ever they can. To the firſt, we muſt freely own, we have deſerved God's greateſt Judgments, but not for the Cauſes they aſſign; and freely own, that this Misfortune has the Face of one, and is as heavy* as a *Judgment, and therefore I hope all People will improve under it, and make as good uſe of it, as if it were indeed a Judgment. But till they ſhall produce ſome certain and impartial Rules by which they proceed in forming Cenſures, and in applying them, to Nations, or to private People, they will give us leave, I hope, to ſuſpend. And to the ſecond ſort, who think to turn a* Kingdom *into a* Commonwealth, *I can only ſay, that I hope, the Extent of our Dominions, the Number of our Nobility, the Honour of our Gentry, the Genius of our People, and the whole Current of our Laws, will always provide us with a ready Anſwer to an impudent and clamorous Faction. God, I hope, will evermore preſerve us from a Species of Government, as ill fitted for our Nation, as Popery is for our Religion.*

A

SERMON

On *Pſalm* cxlvi. *verſ.* 3, 4, 5.

O put not your truſt in Princes, nor in any Child of Man, for there is no help in them.

For when the breath of man goeth forth, he ſhall turn again to his earth; and then all his thoughts periſh.

Bleſſed is he that hath the God of Jacob *for his help, and whoſe hope is in the Lord his God.*

WE know not who it was, that compoſed this Pſalm, nor what it was that occaſion'd it. But the Providence of God furniſheth all People, with occaſions more than enow, of applying theſe words, to themſelves, but too too pertinently. It hath furniſh'd *Us*, with One, not many Years ago, ſo very proper, that it gives freſh and lively pain, to every one that remembers it, with half the Conſideration it de-

ſerves. It furniſhes us *now* with another, of which no living Man, perhaps, can ſee the conſequence at full, but every one can ſee enough to drive him to Sorrow and Amazement, and cauſe him to ſay, with the Pſalmiſt, *The Lord is King, the Earth may be glad thereof*; *yea the multitude of the Iſles may be glad thereof*: glad, that their Affairs are in the hands of him, who *has* all Power, and *is* all Wiſdom, and all Goodneſs; who bringeth Light out of Darkneſs, Good out of Evil, and can turn every thing to their Advantage who ſerve him truly.

Whether it were, that the Pſalmiſt here directs himſelf, againſt the common inclination of Men, which is, to build great hopes upon the Promiſes of Princes and Great Men, and rather to depend on them, than on God above, who keepeth his Promiſe for ever; or whether the Death of ſome Great Prince, had given the Jews, in their Captivity, ſome mighty diſappointment; whatever it was, that occaſion'd the compoſing of this Pſalm, 'tis plain the words of the Text adviſe us, *Firſt*, Not to put our truſt *in Princes, nor any Child of Man*: and that for this reaſon, *There is no help in them, becauſe when the breath of Man goeth forth, he ſhall turn again to his earth, and all his thoughts periſh. Secondly*, they direct us where we *are* to place

place our Truſt and Confidence, and that is in God; *Bleſſed is he that hath the God of* Jacob *for his help, and whoſe hope is in the Lord his God.* I. Of the Perſons in whom we are *not* to place our Truſt and Confidence, and they are *Princes*: *Put not your truſt in Princes, i. e.* in no body, no Child of Man; for if you might in any body, you might in *them*, becauſe they have moſt Power, and more opportunities, of anſwering to your Confidence, than any Men beſides. I ſee no reaſon to think that any thing is here ſaid to the Diſparagement of Princes, as thô they were to be truſted leſs, than other Men, for Falſhood or Forgetfulneſs of Promiſes: And therefore to *truſt*, is not here put for *believing*: But they are rather here conſider'd, as the faithfulleſt, as well as the moſt powerful Managers of human Affairs, of the beſt Intentions, as well as greateſt Abilities, both to deſign and execute great Matters; and yet, not to be entirely depended on, for other Reaſons. 'Tis much the ſame that is expreſs'd in *Pſalm* cxviii. 8, 9. *It is better to truſt in the Lord, than to put any Confidence in Man. It is better to truſt in the Lord, than to put any Confidence in Princes, i. e.* the chiefeſt and the beſt of Men: And the Reaſon here aſſign'd, why they are not ſo to be truſted and depended on, namely, becauſe they are ſo ſubject to Death, delivers them from all ſuſpicion of Blame; *to put*

our truſt therefore *in Princes*, does, in this place, ſignifie, to think the ſettlement of their Affairs ſo ſtrong and ſure, that nothing can diſturb them; to truſt ſo to the Wiſdom of their Management, their Valour, and their Might, their good Intentions, and their great Abilities, as to be quite ſecure, and to ſuſpect no Change can happen; it either ſignifies this Confidence, which is innocent, thô inconſiderate; or this Confidence with Impiety, truſting in the Arm of Fleſh alone, and vaunting with the fooliſh Man, who ſaith in his heart, *Tuſh, I ſhall never be moved, no harm ſhall happen to me.* If the Truſt that is here diſſuaded from, be contrary *to*, or excluſive *of*, that Truſt we always ought to put in God, then to be ſure, it is condemn'd, and ſinful; but if it be only a weak and groundleſs Truſt, then there is leſs Offence than Folly in it, and the heavy Diſappointments it muſt needs meet, will puniſh it ſufficiently. Sometimes we ſee a Prince truly noble, juſt, and merciful, wiſe and brave, a Father of his Country, a Lover of his People, careful of all their Intereſts and their Honour, and born, as it were, to the good of Mankind: It would be impoſſible not to put great Confidence in ſuch a Prince, and to hope a Nation will be happy under ſuch Adminiſtration, whilſt he lives; this ſort of Truſt is reaſonable, becauſe 'tis built upon ſo good ground.

Another

Another time, we ſee a Prince of beauteous Aſpect, lovely Diſpoſition, inclin'd to Learning, Virtue, Piety, and full of all good Qualities; it would be Stupidity not to hope well of him, and to promiſe our ſelves a Harveſt anſwerable to a Field of ſo fair ſhew; ſuch Hope and Confidence as this, becomes us, as we are reaſonable and conſidering Creatures, and it would be a kind of Ingratitude to God, from whom we acknowledg all theſe Gifts and Graces come, not to conceive ſuch Hopes as ſuch excellent Endowments promiſe: a Man muſt ſhut his eyes on Providence, that will not make his Obſervations on what paſſes, and collect what is moſt reaſonable and likely. For ſince God acts by reaſonable Cauſes, and procures our Peace and Happineſs by Inſtruments that are in Nature proper for that purpoſe, we owe it to him, to expect it from them, where they are ſo promiſing. This is properly to truſt in God; for to look for *Grapes from Thorns, or Figs from Thiſtles*, is to hope againſt Nature, and againſt Reaſon, and not to be excuſed by any Reverence we pretend to God, or dependence on his Power, thô he is truly able to produce thoſe Fruits from thoſe unnatural Stocks. The Men of no Religion, and no Thought, are ſo intent upon theſe *ſecond* Cauſes, that they ſee no *firſt*, nor will acknowledge any

Supream Power, that over-looks and governs our Affairs, but governs them by Nature and by Reaſon: but they who truſt to One, ſtill in Subordination to the other, in conſtant dependence on him, and always in his Power to change and ſuſpend, as he ſees fit, do truly put their truſt in *God*, even when they put their truſt in *Princes*. They look for Reſt and for Security in Peace, where Kings are virtuous, wiſe, and watchful, and the People are at Unity; for Victory in War, where Generals are brave and wary, the Soldiers healthy, numerous, obedient and courageous, and well paid, *i. e.* they promiſe to themſelves the natural effects of Wiſdom, Strength, and Concord; but all from God, who is to bleſs theſe natural and theſe moral Cauſes. They look for plenteous Harveſts, where the Fields are full and flouriſhing, but know, 'tis God that made them ſo, and he that is to bring them in. This Confidence he does himſelf raiſe in us, and therefore never is offended with it, becauſe 'tis built upon the Confidence we have, that he will ſuffer things to go on orderly and naturally, unleſs we provoke him to change or ſuſpend the common Courſe of them. And tho' our Diſappointments are very great, and very many, yet might our hopes and expectations be very reaſonable, and juſt, and are not to be condemned, by an unhappy

happy iſſue. If our truſt in *Princes*, exclude not our truſt in *God*, we need not be afraid it will be faulty. Nor does the Pſalmiſt here condemn ſuch truſt, for its Impiety, but rather, (for the avoiding troubleſome and heavy Diſappointments) would diſſuade us, from putting ſo much truſt in Princes, whoſe Lives are ſo uncertain, and to look up to God more ardently and frequently, whoſe Mercy, and Goodneſs, like himſelf (they *are* himſelf) endure for ever. I think, it is a kind Advice, not to raiſe in our minds, hopes that are ſo eaſily defeated, and when defeated, ſo vexatious and afflicting. *Put not your truſt in Princes, nor in any Child of Man, for there is no help in them.* There is no help in Man, in many Caſes; a thouſand and ten thouſand evils befal us, wherein the Wiſdom, Skill, the Riches, and the Strength of all Mankind, can give no Help, afford no Comfort. If we want Rain, or have too much of it, Can all the World procure a Shower, or hinder it from falling? Can it procure a favourable Wind, or hinder a contrary one from blowing? Can it recover Health, where it is wanting, to the good of thouſands; or reſtore a precious Life, that is, like *David's*, worth ten thouſand? The utmoſt of humane Power, for ought that appears, is but an ability of doing huge Miſchief;

Miſchief; and the beſt of it, is, an ability of hindring one another *from* doing Miſchief. But when we want Aſſiſtance, in moſt of our Extremities, Oh how unable is this World to give it! The Wiſeſt, Richeſt, and moſt powerful Men want help themſelves, and neither can afford it to themſelves, nor others; there is indeed no help in them. *For when the breath of Man goeth forth, he ſhall return again to his Earth, and then all his thoughts periſh.* The very beſt is here ſuppos'd of the very ableſt of them, that they may be full of good Intentions, form great and good Deſigns, have their Hearts wholly bent, on honouring God, promoting Virtue, and profiting Mankind, ſeeking the Intereſt of their People, doing Juſtice, ſhewing Mercy, and imitating Him, whoſe Miniſters and Subſtitutes they are. Happy for them, that they are full of theſe Deſigns! no better thoughts can poſſibly poſſeſs their hearts, or employ their hours; the King of Kings, the Mighty Maſter of them all, ſhall bleſs them, and reward them, whom he finds ſo doing. But this is, much too often, *all* they do; they form a multitude of brave Deſigns, and live to effect bnt few! *I have ſaid ye are Gods, but ye ſhall die like men,* and this *they* find, and *we* find alſo. Poor Princes, Poor People! They raiſe our Hopes, and they deſtroy them ſuddenly. We gather up all our Truſt, and place

place it on their Lives, and in a day or two, thoſe Lives are ſpilt like water on the ground. They are, as the Prophet calls them, *the breath of our Noſtrils:* And Nations ſometimes ſeem to live in them, and only to breath their breath; and yet *their breath goeth forth*, like other Peoples breath, *and they return again to their Earth*, (*their* earth as well as *ours*) *and all then their thoughts periſh*, and all *our* thoughts too, with them: but not our thoughtfulneſs, that ſtill ſurvives, to trouble every wiſe conſidering Man. Our Thoughts are in this place our Hopes, and they expire with the breath of him who kindled them. His thoughts, who rais'd our thoughts, periſh, and therefore ours muſt periſh with them. Who can enough eſteem thoſe Lives, which by Experience, are found ſo uſeful to the World, to the ſecuring its tranquillity and happineſs; or thoſe who from their earlieſt Infancy, have promiſed all the good, that Men can look for, from the moſt virtuous towardly diſpoſition, and whoſe precocious advances, could not fail of giving us ſome jealous Fears, with our moſt lively Hopes! Who can enough eſteem ſuch Lives, if we conſider theſe fine Qualities! and who can value them too little, or truſt too little in them, who conſiders how ſoon *their breath goeth forth, and they return again to Earth, and all their thoughts periſh!* What muſt we do

in

in this uncertainty? Our Affairs require a life as durable as Braſs, and the Laws of our Mortality will admit of none, but what is ſubject to a thouſand certain, and a thouſand accidental evils, each of which may break us all to pieces. Let us do any thing in this Uncertainty, but blame the Providence of God, who hangs the good of ſo much People, on ſo ſmall a Thread: for, Righteous are his Ways, and Juſt his Government, whatever we may fear, whatever we endure.

But may I not, unblam'd, ſay with the Prophet, *Jerem.* 12. 1. (I know I ſay it with all deference and humility) *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with Thee of thy Judgments?* When thou, in mercy, turnedſt away the Captivity of our *Zion*, we were like them that dream; when our Enemies were juſt upon us, *they ſtumbled and fell; then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with joy.* The greateſt Enemies we had, could not forbear proclaiming, *The Lord hath done great things for them.* We could not our ſelves, in Gratitude, forbear proclaiming, *The Lord hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoyce.*

Either to temper theſe Felicities, or puniſh our Ingratitude, Thou ſtoppedſt up, for ever, the Breath of our Noſtrils; *The anointed of the Lord was taken away from us, of whom we ſaid, under her ſhadow,*

ſhadow, we ſhall live (not among the Heathen, but at home) *in plenty and ſecurity.*

To ſhew thou didſt intend but to correct, and not to give us unto Death, thou didſt, by unexpected Inſtruments, deliver the Life of the King from Fear of the Enemy, and from the Snare of the Hunter; Thou ſavedſt him from Deſtruction, and crownedſt him with Mercy and Loving Kindneſs; and mad'ſt him inſtrumental in procuring the deſire of all our Hearts, an honourable Peace; the Opportunity of healing all our Wounds, recovering all our Loſſes, and making up the Breaches our inteſtine Foes, our fooliſh Diſcords, and ill grounded Animoſities had occaſioned; the Opportunity of ſettling our Affairs, and looking to the Ground we ſtood upon; of putting them in ſuch a Poſture, that neither Enemies abroad, nor Enemies at home might give us any great Diſturbance; that the Religion of our Country, and its moſt ancient, propereſt, and beſt tempered Government, might be ſecured, againſt the Attempts and Machinations of its old inveterate Enemies, the Sons of Violence and Darkneſs, and from the noiſy Importunities of unexperienced, raw, new fangled Schematiſts, and Speculators. But contrary to this, the Spirit of Diſcord is gone out among us, and the ſweet Hope of all the Kingdom, is in a

moment, ſnatch'd away from us; e're we had time to try to move thee, by our Prayers, or time to apprehend a Stroke ſo painful and ſo mortal. Thy former Favours did not promiſe ſuch Concluſion. But we will hold our Peace, ſince 'tis thy doing; We are much ſurer that thou mayſt in Juſtice, thus chaſtiſe us for our Sins, than we could be that thou hadſt ſo mueh Mercy for ſuch Sinners, as we have, all our Lives, experienced from thee. Permit us never ſo long, to talk with thee of thy Judgments, yet muſt we ſtill conclude, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when we plead with thee.*

Such Loſſes, and ſuch heavy Diſappointments, needs muſt prove effectual Cures of all our Confidence in Princes. Never were Hopes more juſtly raiſed, nor placed more reaſonably, than ours have been, upon two Noble Objects; and yet Six Years have quite defeated them, dried up our Springs, and almoſt deſolated a Royal Tribe, one of the faireſt and moſt fruitful in the World. How ſhort is our Proſpect now! in what a little Compaſs is our Kingly Family contain'd! Two precious Lives make up our whole Treaſure!

The People of the Eaſt, we find in Scriptures, addreſſed to their Princes, with—*O King, Live for ever.* 'Tis a vain Complement to Men of Fleſh and Blood, whoſe Breath goeth forth ſo ſud-

ſuddenly, who dye like other Men, who return again to their Earth, and whoſe Thoughts all periſh in a moment; but if 'twere ever reaſonable, our Caſe would call for it, and *we* would uſe it. May God enlarge theſe Borders! build to theſe Princes a ſure Houſe! and bind up their Souls in the Bundle of Life! a long one here for our ſakes, and, for their own, an Everlaſting one, in Heaven!

II. Let us now withdraw from this uncomfortable ſide. The Lives of Princes, are, it ſeems, like Lands of Darkneſs, where, every ſtep we make, is in Diſtruſt and Fear: They give us little but Alarms, Defeats and Diſappointments. Let us ſeek a Country of more Light and Safety, where Hope dwells, and where we may abide with Confidence. *Bleſſed is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whoſe hope is in the Lord his God.* This is a Life, and Will, and Power, we may depend upon; *Great is the Lord, and marvellous, worthy to be praiſed, there is no end of his greatneſs. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. His kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and his dominion endureth throughout all ages.* Theſe are Foundations ſtrong enough for all the Truſt and Confidence a Heart can hold. He is of infinite Goodneſs to intend the Happineſs of all his Creatures, of infinite Wiſdom to know wherein it lies, and of infinite Power to effect his wiſe

and good deſigns towards us. Here, therefore, we may place our Truſt, without any Fears of Diſappointment; here we we muſt fix our Hopes, for here we can only find our Help.

Were there not ſuch a Power above, to overlook and govern Men, and their Affairs, what a Place of Miſery and Confuſion would this World be? what with the Certainty of natural Cauſes, working many ſad effects, tho known before, yet unavoidable; what with the Multitude of fearful Accidents, never to be prevented nor foreſeen; what with the Folly, Ignorance, Miſtakes, the Malice, and Perverſneſs, and the Rage of one anothers Paſſions, how wretched a thing would the Life of a Man be!

The Ways of God, I think, are to permit natural Cauſes to work their natural Effects, according to the Powers he hath endued them with; reſerving to himſelf the Power of altering or ſuſpending them, as he ſees fit, and when he pleaſes; and to ſuffer Men to act as free Agents, having given them Reaſon, and reveal'd his Will to them, and laid down all ſufficient Motives, to reſtrain them from what they know is evil, and to encourage them to what is truly good; reſerving to himſelf, however, the Power of changing their Inclinations, directing them in their Deſigns, and influencing them all, as he ſees fit.

By

By which means, neither the Certainty of natural Operations, nor the Freedom of Mans Will, exclude his Government of Men and Nature, nor hinder us, from addreſſing to him, by *Prayer*, for what we want, and *Praiſe* for what we have received; both which would be in vain, were Nature not to be diverted from her Way, nor the Will of Man flexible, by ſome Superior over-ruling Power. Were Natures Courſe unalterably fixt, and the Will of Men not to be moved, Prayer would be inſignificant and uſeleſs. Were not Men at liberty, in general, they could not be accountable for what they did, they could have neither Vice nor Vertue. Were not the Laws of Nature fixt, we could not live in any ſort of Certainty, we could not undertake any thing, nor could have any Hope or Expectation of ſucceeding. But as it pleaſes God, to govern by theſe two known Rules, and to be ſtill the Maſter of them both, there is all the Room that can be for our Endeavours, Care and Vigilance, our Vertue, and our Studies, and all the Reaſon and Grounds for our applying to him, our truſting in him, and dependence upon him. Our Hope and Truſt in God, muſt therefore be directed by theſe ſettled and eſtabliſhed Rules of Providence. Theſe are the known and ſtanding Laws of his Wiſe Government; The Reſt is Diſpenſation, Favour, Grace, and ſometimes Miracle. Diſpenſation, Grace and Favour, we may innocently hope for,

pray

pray for, and expect, from his indulgent Goodneſs, where no eſtabliſhed Law of Nature is ſubverted; but for a Miracle, 'tis much more reaſonable to wiſh for, than expect, one in our Favour. We know that nothing is impoſſible with God, but yet our Hope is never equal to his Power; nor do we ever truſt in him for any thing uncommon, without ſome Promiſe in particular. We know it is as poſſible for God to reſtore again the Dead to Life, as Health to a diſeaſed Man; what is the Reaſon, then, that we do not importune him with our moſt earneſt and united Prayers, to give us back that dear, ineſtimable Life we have ſo lately parted with, but that we think he ſignifies his Will and Pleaſure to us, by the known ſtated Courſe of Nature, and know we have no reaſon to look for Miracles? Death would not give us ſuch Deſpair immediately, but that we meaſure the Power of God, by the common Exerciſe of it, in the World. And ſo 'tis with putting our Truſt in him, we can carry it no farther than he gives us leave, by his common Rules, or by particular Promiſe. When therefore the *Pſalmiſt* would invite us *to hope in God*, and *put our truſt in him*, he would not have us raiſe in our ſelves Expectations of things ſtrangely unuſual and unlikely; nor to believe that God will do for us, or bring to paſs, whatever we expect or wiſh for, or what we think we want. But we may hope, and truſt in him, for every thing, that is in itſelf reaſonable,

able, and fit for Him to give, and for us to receive.

Our Paſſions often put us upon asking what, is not in it ſelf very reaſonable to expect; no matter, provided it be nothing wicked and forbidden, and nothing to the prejudice and injury of any one elſe. Our Parents, and our Friends, live here, even beyond the common term of humane Life, and we yet deſire of God, they may continue longer with us, and we may hope that he will hear our Prayers: this does not ſeem very Reaſonable, when we conſider the Life of Man, and call to mind the Years that are paſt, and obſerve how it has always been with other People: But yet 'tis very innocent and lawful ſo to do; becauſe we know of no ſett term of days, beyond which none ſhall paſs; that is ſtill in the hands of God; and becauſe the protracting of that Life, is to *us*, we think, of uſe, and to no ones wrong.

The Child is dying, there, of a malignant Feaver, a Train, as it were, of liquid Fire, is running through its Veins, and burning up the Life, that has been the Deſire of I know not how many Years paſt, and the Hopes of I know not how many more to come; the Parents pray to God, in earneſt, you may be ſure, and put their truſt in him, and hope he will extinguiſh this unnatural Flame; and this they do, when Remedies are ineffectual, Phyſicians found of no value, and every thing about them, bids them give it up for loſt. The thing they ask is lawful, the time is not too late, the work is not impoſſible in Nature, and

God

God is the Maſter of all. The Event alone could declare, whether it were not fit for God to give this Life, or for the Parents to receive it. Their Confidence in God was well plac'd, altho their Hopes and Deſires were diſappointed. If Reaſons were to be ſought for, in ſuch caſes, out of, or beyond what natural Cauſes teach us, we may be ſure that God denies us, with as much Reaſon as he gives us, what we ask. We muſt not therefore think our Hopes were wrong placed, and our Confidence in God ill grounded, and our Prayers in vain, becauſe we receive not what we ask ſo earneſtly. Becauſe it is the Power and Goodneſs of God, which juſtifies our Hope and Truſt in him, and which encourages us to pray; and this his Power is not diminiſhed by our Diſappointment, nor is his Goodneſs the leſs, in his not granting what *we* thought (not *He*) convenient for us. It is impoſſible (as I have before ſaid) to pray to God without believing him *kind* to intend our good, *wiſe* to diſcern what is our good, and *powerful* to procure it. Theſe are the very Reaſons of Prayer, and the Motives of addreſſing to God, for what we think we want: And theſe are the Foundations of all our Hope and Confidence in him. And yet theſe are the very Reaſons, why our Prayers may not be heard, and our Hopes not anſwer'd, and yet God be ſtill as merciful and good intention'd towards us, as when he grants our Requeſts. We ſuppoſe him *good*, to intend our Happineſs, he may therefore be good in with-

with-holding from us, what *we* think is good for us, but is not. We ſuppoſe him to be *all wiſe*, and therefore refer it to him to chooſe for us. How do we know he does not exerciſe his great Diſcernment, in refuſing to us what *we* think is good for us, but what he knows is not? Shall we only think *he* judges right, when he judges as *we* judg, and meaſure out his Wiſdom by our Affections and Deſires? If we believe him wiſe enough to chooſe for us, the ſame Reaſon will ſhew him full as wiſe in his refuſing what we ask of him; yes, and full as *kind* too, if we would believe *that* is good for us to have, which he gives, and that not good (all things conſider'd) which he with-holds from us. But the misfortune is, that we meaſure good by our own Affections, and Deſires; that is good, we think, which we ſeem to want, and to ſet our Hearts upon, and nothing elſe can ſatisfie.

Let your Father be 70 Years of Age, and your Child 7, the firſt a wiſe and virtuous Man, a Life that is neceſſary to you, and uſeful to the Commonwealth, and all that are about him; the other, as the reſt of Children are, hopeful enough: If ſome Diſtemper put theſe two Lives into equal danger, you will do what you can, for both; and you will pray for them both, and truſt in God for both their Healths and Safety: But both of them die, and Nature ſwallows up the Concern for the Parent, in the grief for the Child; and becauſe the biaſs of Affection is ſtrongeſt on that ſide, our Hope and Confidence ſeem more defeated, and our Prayers, we think, leſs

heard, in the one Caſe, than the other. 'Tis plain we conſider not the uſefulneſs of the aged Life (the continuance of which was certainly the greater good) in reſpect of the dearneſs of that little Life, which yet we could not tell what it might prove. Theſe things ſhew us, a little, that we are govern'd more by our Affections, than our Reaſon; and that as they make us pray more earneſtly, and hope more firmly, ſo they make our Diſappointments much more heavy, and occaſion us to think our Truſt and Confidence in God were *deceiv'd*, when they were only, *not anſwer'd* according to our Wiſhes. But wherein, then, ſtands the bleſſedneſs of having God for our help, and hoping in the Lord our God, if he will only help us in the way of Nature, and we may only hope for what is reaſonable and fit? why, this is as much as any reaſonable Man can look for, or deſire. The utmoſt that a reaſonable Creature can hope for, is to be favoured and ſucceeded by God in all his reaſonable and honeſt Undertakings, by means that are natural, and common to him with all the World. 'Tis a great Support to the mind of Man, to believe himſelf under the protection of a Power, that is able and ready to ſecure him, whilſt he is acting reaſonably and honeſtly; able to continue on the Courſe of Nature, in its eſtabliſh'd Settlement, by which Men live in good hope, and expectation of Succeſs; by which they plow and ſow, and hope to reap and gather in their Harveſt; by which they ſtudy, labour, venture out to Sea, and hope to gain the Fruits of each, in its due Seaſon: able to prevent a great many miſchievous events;

able

able to remove all hindrance and impediment in the courſe of Nature; able to influence Peoples minds, by diverting them from enterprizing things that would do hurt to others; and by throwing little occaſions in their way, of doing good; and able, by a thouſand and ten thouſand little undiſcernible means, to ſecure our happineſs, and prevent our miſery; to turn the accidents that look as if they would ſwallow us up in Ruin, into the means of our ſecurity and preſervation; to diſſipate thoſe Cloud s of misfortunes that are ready to burſt upon our heads and over-whelm us, and give us Day again, with calm, and ſafety. I can't tell how a Man can live in ſuch a World as this, with any joy, that does not verily believe, and much depend upon the Providence of God; and *that*, without expecting Miracles or Favours very much out of courſe, but only looking for ſuch as are conſiſtent with his known Rules of Government. What ſhould we do without this everlaſting Source of Comforts, this powerful Refuge, under all diſtreſſes? How many ſore Calamities, publick as well as private, do we fall into, out of which no human Power or Wiſdom can deliver us, nor ſhew us any way out of? And how muſt this perplex a Man, unleſs there were a Being above, kind and able, to have recourſe to? Hope is the food and ſuſtenance of the Mind, and Men will live a great while upon it, and all the while much eaſier, tho' in miſery; whereas the ſame afflictions would, without that hope, oppreſs them quite, and drive them to deſpair and madneſs; and this muſt often

often be the Caſe, were not the World, and Men, and their Affairs, all in the hands of God, and in his Government, who can do every thing, beyond what we are able to ask or think. And who would part with ſuch a ſure foundation of Truſt, and Hope, and Confidence, that is not weary of his Life? Who would let go this *Rock of Ages*, for any thing elſe he can lay hold on, in this World? Oh may we never be forſaken by him! yea rather, may we never firſt forſake him! The Life of Princes is a mole of Sand; all the Stability of human things, is the Stability of Wind and Water, changing their face, ſhifting their places every moment; God alone abideth for ever, God alone is worthy of our truſt, and never will deceive it. 'Tis He alone who can extricate us out of all our Difficulties, wipe away all our Tears and Sorrows from our Hearts, deliver us from our Enemies, protract our Princes Lives, ſave us by Few as well as Many, give us no more occaſions of Complaint and Lamentation, and turn *even this* to our advantage; give us the Spirit of Unity and Love of one another, of Wiſdom to direct us in our Publick Reſolutions, and to improve under all the ſeveral Diſpenſations of his Providence. *Is any Rock, like our God? Who is ſo great a God as our God? Be thou exalted Lord in thine own Strength, ſo will we ſing and praiſe thy Power.*

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